

**CITY OF NEWARK  
DELAWARE  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMISSION MINUTES**

October 24, 2023

**MEETING CONVENED:** 7:05 p.m. Microsoft Teams

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tamisha Garnett (Vice Chair Presiding), Sasha Aber, C. Linwood Jackson, Charles Alexander, Patrick McCloskey (virtual), Joel Murphy

**STAFF:** Tara Schiano, City Secretary (virtual)  
Diana Reed, Deputy City Secretary  
Michael Fortner, Senior Planner  
Devan Hardin, Chief Human Resources Officer (virtual)

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Garnett, at 7:05 pm.

**2. MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

Ms. Garnett offered a moment of silence.

**3. ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER:**

In attendance were Tamisha Garnett, C. Linwood Jackson, Sasha Aber, Charles Alexander, Patrick McCloskey (virtually), and Joel Murphy.

Mr. Murphy introduced himself as the commission's District 2 representative. While hailing from Wilmington, he was asked by a Newark acquaintance to serve. Upon his acceptance, he was looking forward to working with the other members.

**4. APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES:**

Before approval of the minutes, Ms. Aber wished to acknowledge and show compassion to the current crisis in Israel and its effect on the community. While some may have religious or familial ties overseas, others may experience increased tension or antisemitism. She believed the goal of this commission is to help make Newark a safe environment for diverse populations. She suggested the commission make a formal proclamation of support for Jewish people worldwide.

She stated this crisis has been the largest slaughter of Jewish people since the Holocaust. However, innocent Palestinians are losing their homes and freedom in addition. This has also stirred antisemitism and islamophobia. She believed a formal proclamation from the commission would suit their mission of inclusivity.

Ms. Garnett asked what a formal proclamation consists of.

Ms. Aber explained it is a formal statement. She noted she was recommended to do this by Tara Schiano. She wished to be cognizant of how this is done to acknowledge the many groups affected. People

of differing faiths in the United States are losing their lives in response to this war.

Ms. Garnett asked where this statement should be placed.

Mr. Jackson believed this topic would be better suited for discussion under an item such as Old/New Business. The other members of the commission, including Ms. Aber, concurred.

Tara Schiano, City Secretary, clarified she did suggest that Ms. Aber mention this topic after the moment of silence. This included that the commission consider writing a letter of support for all groups mentioned excluding Hamas. She explained it could be a short statement of support to post on the commission's webpage. It could be requested that it be showcased on the City's main page for some time. However, it could be addressed during Old/New Business.

Mr. Murphy noted there is a motion on the floor which has not yet been settled. He concurred with Mr. Jackson.

MOTION BY MR. ALEXANDER, SECONDED BY MR. MURPHY: TO APPROVE THE AUGUST MINUTES AS RECEIVED.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 6 to 0.

Aye – Alexander, Garnett, Aber, Jackson, McCloskey, Murphy.

Nay – 0.

Absent – 0.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment.

Diana Reed, Deputy City Secretary, explained that a staff member's presentation is typically asked to be moved to the top of a meeting's agenda to keep staff time in mind, as staff are paid to attend the meetings. She asked that Mr. Fortner's item be moved to just after public comment.

MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MS. ABER: TO MOVE MR. FORTNER'S PRESENTATION AFTER PUBLIC COMMENT.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 6 to 0.

Aye – Alexander, Garnett, Aber, Jackson, McCloskey, Murphy.

Nay – 0.

Absent – 0.

**6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING/INCLUSIONARY ZONING – MIKE FORTNER**

Mike Fortner, Senior Planner, presented an ordinance in the early phase of development as discussed by both the Planning Commission and City Council. There have been multiple presentations on this topic in the past. The Council and the Planning Commission both consider affordable housing to be an important yet complicated matter. There have been numerous housing studies, assessments, and detailed reports since 2015. On March 13, 2023, he presented a complete analysis and summary to Council on this topic.

Mr. Fortner explained there was a housing needs assessment completed in 2016. Most development at that time was for student housing. An economic assessment was conducted due to the concerns that too much vacant housing existed. Results from Newark and the State showed there are more renters now than ever in the past 20 years. Housing is in increasing demand and there is limited housing stock. This has led to high demand, low availability, and therefore higher prices. Growth in Delaware has been targeted towards healthcare, tourism, and retail. These professions require a more modest income and affordable housing. The supply of affordable housing is very limited.

He explained in the City's own needs assessment, it was discovered Newark has a vacancy rate of 2.6%. That percentage has since decreased to 1.9%. This is considered very low compared to a healthier vacancy rate around 7%-10%. While available apartments contribute to this percentage, a low percentage indicates they are hard to find overall. While much of the available housing is geared towards college students, their market is still competitive which can be seen by the requirement to secure housing in October for the following school year. He noted the Newark Housing Authority (NHA) has a waiting list of approximately 800 households.

Ms. Aber asked where most of those on the waiting list are currently living.

Mr. Fortner was unsure. They could be couch-surfing or living in housing that is too expensive for their income. He stated housing is considered affordable when the resident is paying no more than 30% of their gross income. However, many are paying above that threshold.

He stated in 2022, a housing workgroup study was conducted after the economic analysis. The resulting discussion was to investigate inclusionary zoning. He noted Delaware additionally conducts a statewide analysis of impediments to equitable housing. A primary factor of inequitable housing is zoning. Delaware has a lot of zoning that is geared toward single-family houses which are only applicable to those of a certain income range. There is a need for more affordable types of housing. Not having a diverse housing stock leads to the proportional segregation of a community.

Mr. Fortner continued to explain exclusionary zoning is the opposite of inclusionary zoning. It is a set of policies that prevent affordable housing through land use zoning code requirements. This was a common practice in the United States through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the Zoning Code could exclude minorities. A book called "The Color of Law" specifically addresses land use. This book shares that after World War II, GI and benefit bills would be given to all soldiers alike. This was responsible for creating the great middle class. Suburbanization created a system of wealth as it gave Americans the opportunity to own homes during this time. However, African Americans were excluded from many of these housing provisions and could not benefit from suburban development. There was a great investment in suburbanization, but also a de-investment in urban living. As they were not permitted in suburbanization, African Americans and other minorities were restricted to the de-invested urban areas. This created the disparity and segregation that is still seen in the present day.

He began to share the characteristics of exclusionary zoning. The first is low-density, large minimum lot sizes, which increases costs due to their scaling. Only a certain demographic will be able to utilize the larger housing in these lots. The second is restrictions on single-family homes and limits on multi-family homes and occupancy, leading to exclusive communities being formed. The third is limits on the height of buildings and large setback requirements, restricting there to be limited use of the land where affordable housing is permitted. He noted Newark is guilty of this, but the site plan approval process allows for setback reliefs and higher density with design modifications.

Mr. Fortner explained inclusionary zoning is a specific zoning reform policy. Housing diversification is

a factor that includes variations of housing types in traditional single-family zoning. Newark has considerable mixed-use zoning which allows for diversification and higher densities. He stated both Council and the community have been open to zoning changes to allow for higher densities. Higher density allows for more affordable housing opportunities and supply to meet the growing demand. He noted a common criticism in Newark is the development of housing geared toward students. However, affordable housing for students opens more affordable housing for other demographic groups. If the students reside in student-targeted units, families will be able to reside in the more traditional rentals.

He stated certain residential zones, such as RE, RH, RT, RS, and RD, only allow for single-family houses. Other governments are changing their single-family zoning to allow for other types of units within. Such units include townhomes and duplexes. Single-family homes can additionally be modified to allow for multiple households. An extension of this idea is an independent unit built out of a single-family home, known as an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). When beginning to explain the benefits of increasing occupancy allowances, he explained a three-student limitation was placed on single-family houses. He noted students tend to be gentrifiers in Newark due to expansion of off-campus housing into modest-priced residential housing.

Mr. Alexander believed the areas' influx of student tenants is due to landlords' motivations to generate profit.

Mr. Fortner noted these limitations not only combatted student party lifestyles but created an affordability structure that made student rental housing less profitable in these areas. Families with more than three people are still permitted. However, a negative outcome of this limitation is that the amount of student rental housing expands due to needing more houses for each group of three students. He believed modifications to make things fairer could help bring some relief to finding housing.

He explained a potential inclusionary zoning ordinance could require a certain percentage of units to be affordable in a new development project. That is dependent on the community. He noted there is a phenomenon known as the "missing middle" in the market. Often, this is below 80% of the area median income (AMI). Others, it is set to below 120%. However, there is a large need for housing targeted towards below 50%. The number fluctuations make the equations of each situation and percentage rather complex.

Mr. Alexander pointed out affordable apartment complexes in California have been torn down and rebuilt to where only 30% can afford to move in. Methods like this decrease the amount of affordable housing available due to potential higher profits.

Mr. Fortner noted there are multiple factors and stipulations that could be implemented in a potential ordinance. It can be mandatory or voluntary with incentives such as tax relief or density bonuses. Set aside requirements can additionally be discussed in the ordinance. The income target could potentially be below 30% of the AMI. He noted 120% of the AMI is workforce housing. The target percentage would need to be decided in the ordinance. Rezoning could be a significant developer incentive. It typically allows for more density, and more density means greater profits. Annexation is also an additional benefit to any prospective developers.

Mr. Alexander believed annexation is a sufficient incentive for implementing a portion of affordable housing units.

Mr. Fortner cautioned that affordable units could cause losses to the developer due to lower prices. These losses will have to be paid for by tenants in the non-affordable units. However, density bonuses pose more feasible projects to the developer. He shared a fee in-lieu of affordable units is another option where developers could pay the City if they do not wish to build affordable units. The City would then use this fee

to fund other affordable housing programs.

Mr. Alexander asked if there has been any indication whether Newark's developers are interested in inclusionary zoning.

Mr. Fortner stated this idea is in the early stages of discussion.

Mr. Alexander asked if there has been any discussion with these developers.

Mr. Fortner stated this is hard to sell to developers due to the potential fluctuation in profit. Volunteer programs are generally complicated due to developer by-rights and procedures. He would acknowledge potential incentives later in the presentation along with benefits for both the community and the developer.

Mr. Alexander believed development is a profitable pursuit. He voiced his wish for reasonable and affordable housing. He asked how this idea can be achieved.

Mr. Fortner began to explain the benefits of inclusionary zoning. It does not require any direct taxpayer subsidy, increases the supply of affordable housing, poses greater opportunities for low-income households and racial integration, enables "value capture" when paired with density bonuses, and provides health and economic benefits to disadvantaged persons.

However, inclusionary zoning can backfire by reducing the amount of housing built. It additionally can be weaponized in bad faith by people who do not want affordable housing or new development, lets existing market-rate housing off the hook, passes expense to new housing, relies on a permanent housing shortage, and only benefits the residents of the below market-rate units.

Mr. Fortner noted there are additional housing discussions available online. There will be opportunities for workshops, focus groups, and continued discussion with the Planning Commission and Council. He would be open to returning to future meetings with the commission to present and provide updates if desired. The goal is to reach out to as many stakeholder groups as possible and develop an ordinance that is right for Newark.

Mr. Alexander explained he was cognizant of the affordable housing issue, having started two non-profit groups upon moving to Delaware. He believed most development is motivated by potential profit. As constituents are the groups typically pictured in this topic, he wondered if developers have considered the nature of this problem.

Mr. Fortner noted developers are a stakeholder that will be involved and listened to in this process. The department does not want to create an ordinance that would prevent further development. He believed this is a business that provides a need, and that need incentivizes developers to build more housing. The department's vision is to create an ordinance that incentivizes developers to build while creating markets for diverse housing.

Mr. Jackson asked if there are any examples of these plans executed around Delaware.

Mr. Fortner noted New Castle and Sussex County have seen success, the former having its own inclusionary zoning ordinance. The State and other jurisdictions have also promoted these ideas. Every community has an ordinance tailored to their specific needs and housing dynamics.

Mr. Jackson noted Wilmington has been successful in building affordable housing.

Mr. Fortner agreed but was unaware if they had an ordinance specifically for inclusionary zoning. Wilmington has a different housing market with a surplus of vacant housing in poverty-stricken areas allowing them to make efforts to improve those areas and attract potential residents.

Mr. Jackson asked if these developers were improving the housing while making it more affordable.

Mr. Fortner explained there are often government subsidies, programs, and groups, such as those in the State and Newark. There are targeted financing and groups for affordable development.

Mr. Alexander asked if there are municipalities like Newark that have successfully implemented inclusionary zoning and therefore can be used as a reference for an ordinance.

Mr. Fortner did not have specific examples prepared. He noted the college town dynamics are impactful and need to be considered during planning process.

Mr. Murphy wondered what role the university has played in this issue. He noted there is gentrification often caused by student housing expanding throughout college towns. He believes there is not much involvement from the community, which has led to friction with students. He wondered how this could be combatted so similar issues are not faced when addressing both low income and student housing.

Mr. Fortner believed the university is becoming more engaged in the discussion of this problem. In his previous presentation on March 13<sup>th</sup>, he shared the history of how the University of Delaware originated in Newark. He referenced a book, "The American College Town," which specifically addresses and shows a case study of Newark. Universities had many commuters, but residential life became prominent after WWII. Until the 1970's, when student housing development boomed. 38% of current UD students live in student housing. The university does a better job of housing students than most other state universities. Universities have a quasi-relationship with providing housing throughout the country. College students will typically live on campus only for their first and second years. If Council wishes for the university to build more housing, they could, but he believed there would be significant difficulty renting it.

Ms. Aber commented she understood the crisis was that developers needed to build housing for students due to the lack of it on-campus.

Mr. Fortner stated this is partially true, as the university did not have a house for every student to live in for all four years. They have housing for all freshmen and many sophomores, but they house fewer juniors and even less seniors. While a solution would be to build housing for them, most prefer to live off-campus.

Ms. Aber wondered if the number of students is increasing while the number of available units is decreasing.

Mr. Fortner believed the number of units has remained approximately the same, as none have been added since the 1970's-1980's. However, Newark's population has significantly increased in the past thirty years.

Ms. Aber asked if this was upon the closure of Christiana Towers.

Mr. Fortner explained the closure of the Towers created a housing impact on the City. When they

were closed, UD acquired the University Courtyard apartments. From their point of view, there was no loss of beds. However, their purchase of the apartments created a loss in existing private housing.

Ms. Aber wondered if it was a situation of students needing beds when the university increases enrollment.

Mr. Fortner found this to be good opportunity for revenue. He explained when the university buys land to develop housing, then the property is removed from the tax base. Housing for students in the private market is taxable and profitable for the developers. It is additionally beneficial to the City for property tax payment and utilities. The single-family homes are subsidized as well, and must pay for additional services such as garbage removal. This is a reason why low density is not an efficient way of development. However, the services are already present in high-density buildings such as apartment complexes.

Mr. Alexander asked if the Towers are university property, and the commission could not weigh in on the future use of the property.

Mr. Fortner confirmed. They will likely be demolished within the year and have been closed for a significant amount of time.

Ms. Garnett recalled Mr. Fortner's mention of Wilmington refurbishing vacant houses to offer to potential residents. She wondered if there are opportunities for the same type of program in Newark.

Mr. Fortner stated there are not many of these opportunities in Newark due to the lack of dilapidated and abandoned buildings for the City to acquire.

Ms. Aber stated there is a phenomenon where run-down houses in dense downtown business areas are selling for over \$500K. She believed they should be torn down due to the safety concerns they pose. She noted a singular student pays \$800-900 for rent while fitting three people under one roof.

Mr. Fortner noted these homes need to be inspected in certain situations.

Ms. Garnett wondered if this could be an option, reiterating Mr. Alexander's concern about a struggle to gain developer support. She asked what the commission could do to support the department in this initiative.

Mr. Fortner suggested the commission could follow this process, repeatedly review it, offer suggestions for design, and then advocate for similar policies if decided they are worthwhile. He cautioned many tend to look for a "silver bullet" when addressing affordable housing. However, inclusionary zoning, ADU's, and other related methods will not combat every aspect of the problem. No singular solution exists.

Mr. Alexander noted the commission serves as catalysts and not executors. He suggested joining with interested groups to promote change on this topic. While the commission could provide education, these collaborators would need to lead the initiative.

Mr. Jackson asked if this ordinance had already been brought before Council.

Mr. Fortner explained the ordinance is in its early stages as there are many factors to consider during its design. He encouraged the commission to follow and further educate themselves on this topic. That way, they could potentially help to provide ideas for additional affordable housing solutions.

Ms. Aber asked that the commission be emailed when inclusionary zoning is presented at future meetings.

Mr. Fortner noted there are additional recordings of meetings where these presentations took place along with links to additional information in his presentation.

MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. ALEXANDER: TO RETURN TO THE AGENDA.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 6 to 0.

Aye – Alexander, Garnett, Aber, Jackson, McCloskey, Murphy.

Nay – 0.

Absent – 0.

**7. CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON: DEFINING COMMISSION GOALS AND CREATE ACTION PLAN**

Mr. Alexander noted that when the commission was created, there were many unorganized words included on their document. Mr. Alexander took these words and used them to create a vision statement, mission statement, and actions. He wished to provide words and ideas that the commission can relate to when moving forward with an initiative. He believed the commission will not be necessary if their vision is fully achieved. The mission is how they can organize themselves to reach the vision created. The actions are divided into three groups: internal to City operations, community and City operations, and inclusive issues respective to the City at-large. He believed this is a way to help the commission become more organized in their own operations.

Ms. Garnett asked if he believed the clarity of his reorganization would help the commission create their action plan.

Mr. Alexander proposed they provide their feedback at their next meeting after reviewing the document and its information.

**8. 2023 EVENT PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Garnett pointed out 2023 is ending. She asked when Inclusion Day will take place.

Ms. Reed explained this is an event planned and created by the commission. There has not yet been a selected date.

Mr. Alexander noted the concept has only been discussed.

Ms. Garnett asked if there are any more events in 2023 for the commission could participate in.

Mr. Alexander suggested communicating with different groups that share or fall under similar concerns. He did not want certain demographics to be excluded from their discussions.

Ms. Garnett asked how those groups could be identified.

Mr. Alexander responded this could be additionally discussed and determined by the commission. He could provide suggestions when needed.



Ms. Garnett stated the commission wished to define their goals, action plan, logo, sources, and contact information before approaching these groups.

Mr. Jackson stated an update is scheduled for later on the agenda.

Mr. Murphy asked what the 2023 Event Participation item consists of.

Ms. Garnett explained there are events in Newark that the commission wishes to use for community outreach.

Mr. Jackson asked what events these are.

Ms. Garnett stated a recent event was Community Day. However, they did not have the correct resources or plan in place to participate effectively as a commission.

Mr. Alexander did not agree with the process of stating they could not participate. He wished to note they were suggested not to participate due to lack of resources or planning.

Mr. Murphy understood that there is an item for event participation, but the commission does not have any solidified goals yet. He asked how they could participate in these events if they do not have a full understanding of their goals.

Ms. Garnett stated this is an ongoing agenda item that has been discussed over many of the previous months.

Mr. Murphy believed Mr. Alexander had taken a step in the right direction. This is an opportunity to establish the commission's identity, mission, and method of execution. He believed these factors should be determined before event participation and actions are discussed. He was recommended by Councilwoman Corinth Ford to help the commission find their objective.

Mr. Jackson agreed as it took many meetings to find a proper mission statement. He believed this served as a good basis. He believed the functions and mission statement must be decided and displayed for the commission to move forward.

Ms. Aber noted the commission is now twice the number of members it has been for a long time. Now that there is an agreeable group working together, she believes they will begin to make significant progress. She explained there have been many items that were placed on the agenda but repeatedly carried over to subsequent. She believed these items should be set aside until the commission is more established.

Ms. Garnett noted the commission is still discussing the 2023 Event Participation item.

Ms. Aber believed the commission does not have any further events approaching and does not believe they are ready to participate in Winterfest.

Ms. Garnett reiterated 2023 is ending and the commission is not prepared to take part in the remaining events.

## **9. INCLUSION DAY EVENT DISCUSSION**

Ms. Garnett believed this discussion still pertains to events.

Ms. Aber noted in the minutes they discussed conducting an event in late spring or early summer. She had researched inclusion-based city holidays, vendors, organizations, cultures, and groups. If it takes place during the warmer season, the commission has significant time to plan.

#### **10. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

- Update of D&I page on City's website

Ms. Reed explained the Legislative Department spoke with the website developers and Communications Division. They have all the commission's desires and have begun working on the webpage. However, there has been a small issue with its location. They had hoped to mimic the Conservation Advisory Commission's page, but discovered the location mapping was not easy to find. They want to ensure that the page can be easily located, as that was a request of the commission.

Ms. Aber noted she reached out to the Parks & Recreation Department for photos to include. While nice, they were not framed suitably for the website. She reached out to The Newark Post and received other photos from Josh Shannon. However, the commission must approve their use.

She noted she was supposed to reach out to the University of Delaware's art department regarding designing a logo. The university replied they were interested, but Ms. Aber had told them the commission currently had nothing to offer in exchange. Her contact suggested writing a formal document and stating if there was a reward.

Ms. Aber shared that she formed the idea of collecting gift cards from working on Newark Restaurant Week. She reached out to Mark Arehart, Executive Director of The Newark Partnership and asked if there were any left. If there were, she proposed being given a few to give to a student if the commission likes a logo they designed. Mr. Arehart had told her there are no gift cards left, but The Newark Partnership could offer \$200 as payment if a logo is selected. However, she would need to clear this with the rest of the commission before accepting it and potentially running a logo contest.

She showed the photos provided to her by The Newark Post. She picked three that best showed a diverse group of people in Newark's community. She noted the commission could find other photos that would additionally better suit their webpage. She believed those provided by Parks & Recreation held too much open space. If it is still a significant amount of time before their webpage is completed, the commission members could provide more photos.

Ms. Garnett asked if she was proposing to use these photos on the website.

Ms. Aber explained these photos are from Community Day to serve as placeholders. However, she was open to suggestions. She noted there is plenty of time to acquire new photos if their page will not be live for another month. Additionally, photos can easily be added, removed, or replaced.

Mr. Alexander noted historically only black and white ethnicities are considered when the term "diversity and inclusion" is discussed. He requested the commission to sit down and speak about which groups they specifically want to represent.

Mr. Jackson stated this was discussed in a prior meeting regarding the logo. He recalled Mr. Alexander stated he wanted all groups incorporated into the logo, but that was determined to be impossible. He believed the commission agreed that all groups should be acknowledged, but not be part of the logo.

Mr. Alexander wished to name these groups.

Ms. Aber clarified she was not stating these photos represent every single group.

Mr. Jackson suggested writing the names of these groups down for the commission to read and reference.

Mr. Murphy pointed out there is a risk of possible exclusion if you post a list of supported groups.

Mr. Jackson agreed, but stated once more it is impossible to acknowledge and include every single group in existence. He suggested creating a list of groups like a dictionary.

In making her motion, Ms. Aber explained she acquired these photos under the assumption the webpage would be completed a month ago.

Mr. Alexander disagreed with the use of the photos, believing they do not represent every group.

Ms. Aber noted they do not, but they are not permanent additions and will be replaced once more are acquired.

MOTION BY MS. ABER, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON: TO APPROVE 1-3 PICTURES FROM THE NEWARK POST WITH CREDIT TO JOSH SHANNON TO TEMPORARILY GO ONTO THE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMISSION WEBPAGE AS THE WEB DESIGNER SEES FIT AND UNTIL THE COMMISSION HAS OTHER PHOTOS TO REPLACE THESE.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 6 to 0.

Aye – Alexander, Garnett, Aber, Jackson, McCloskey, Murphy.

Nay – 0.

Absent – 0.

Ms. Aber encouraged her fellow members to collect photos in their day-to-day lives for use by the commission.

Ms. Garnett believed a discussion of the commission's approach to website visuals would be beneficial.

Mr. Murphy believed this is a good start.

Ms. Garnett proposed adding an agenda item for next month on how the webpage should be managed and maintained.

Ms. Aber noted she had multiple connections that could help to provide pictures.

Mr. Jackson was confused if the commission had voted to not place the photos on the webpage.

Ms. Aber explained they voted to temporarily add these photos as a placeholder if the webpage goes live soon.

Ms. Garnett added the main issue with the webpage is that the web developer is currently seeing where it can be placed. Everything else the commission has requested can be accommodated.

Mr. Jackson suggested adding the mission statement to the website for when it goes live.

Ms. Garnett wished to make a motion to add the topic of how to maintain the webpage and what will be used to launch it to next month's agenda.

Ms. Aber asked if the webpage will be up by the next month.

Ms. Reed explained staff hoped to post it by the time of this meeting. However, there were mapping issues in the past week that prevented it from happening.

Ms. Garnett believed reviewing the content that will be posted would be beneficial.

Mr. Alexander noted he used to teach methods of how to create an effect on the public. He believed this was an important but not urgent matter.

Ms. Aber asked for opinions on having the UD Art Department design their logo and presenting an award from The Newark Partnership.

Ms. Reed shared the logo that was discussed in the previous meeting. When Mr. Jackson asked, she stated this had not been approved and there were other ideas for consideration.

Ms. Aber asked for the commission's approval to approach the Art Department and hold a class or contest to design a logo. She noted the opportunity to hold it for this semester has been missed with the cancellation of the commission's September meeting. She had not yet told the Art Department an award could be given for the contest. Additionally, she did not know how long this process would take.

Mr. Alexander stated the logo needed to be equally marketable as artistic. He suggested these students consult marketing officials around campus when creating their designs.

Ms. Aber stated art and marketing classes typically overlap to a degree.

Ms. Garnett asked for a motion.

MOTION BY MS. ABER, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON: TO USE \$200 FROM THE NEWARK PARTNERSHIP TOWARDS A LOGO DESIGN CONTEST WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE ART DEPARTMENT.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE 5 to 1.

Aye – Alexander, Garnett, Aber, McCloskey, Murphy.

Nay – Jackson.

Absent – 0.

Mr. Jackson explained that it was discussed previously that the process of finding funds and creating another logo will take more time. He pointed out the City has already submitted multiple logo designs. He noted they had settled on the logo Ms. Reed displayed, but Mr. Alexander held criticism.

Mr. Alexander held issue with the color choices. He believed they were only exemplary of the pride

movement. While greatly supporting PRIDE, he wanted more diverse colors.

Mr. Jackson noted the logo has been discussed at every meeting. Creating the logo and finding the funding took too much time. He believed the logos designed by the City were professional and would save both time and money.

Ms. Garnett did not believe the commission decided to use this logo.

It was agreed this could be discussed at the following meeting.

Ms. Aber wished to return to the topic of a statement regarding the crisis in Israel.

Ms. Reed noted there are two topics to be added to the next agenda. The Planning Department would like to discuss the Newark Bicycle Plan. The Human Resources Division has a presentation pertaining to recruitment.

Mr. Alexander asked if Devan Hardin, Chief Human Resources Officer, will be in attendance. Ms. Reed confirmed.

Mr. Jackson asked if presentations could be moved to Item #5 on the agenda, while public comment could be placed to Item #10. His idea was to place presentations immediately after approval of the minutes while public comment could be placed before adjournment.

Mr. Alexander wished to be clear about Ms. Hardin's presentation for the next meeting.

Ms. Reed pointed out a copy of the presentation was given to the commission this evening for review and discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Alexander asked if the Chief of Police would be present, and if not, would he be able to attend.

Ms. Reed stated she would notify Ms. Hardin.

Ms. Garnett asked for confirmation that the next meeting will be November 28<sup>th</sup>. It was confirmed.

Ms. Aber asked if the City could make a statement on Israel, or if that is up to the commission.

Ms. Garnett asked if this could be drafted and sent to Ms. Schiano for approval.

Ms. Aber explained the issue lies in the fact that the commission must approve the statement first, but it will take time as the photos did.

Ms. Garnett noted the commission could make the motion for the statement but must agree on the language first.

Ms. Aber stated they must be in person to do this.

Ms. Garnett believed members of the commission could email Ms. Schiano information. She could review it and then determine if it could be added to the agenda. She wondered if they must determine the language of the statement at the following meeting.

Ms. Aber stated the words must be written down.

Ms. Reed noted Ms. Schiano had said the City will not issue a statement. If a statement is desired, it must be voted on by the commission.

Ms. Garnett asked if Ms. Aber could draft a statement and coordinate with Ms. Schiano on the process she had mentioned prior.

Ms. Reed responded it could be placed on the next agenda.

Ms. Aber believed this to be a poor idea for timeliness.

Mr. Murphy was concerned that Israel seems to be the target of the statement but is not the only group impacted by this crisis. He did not wish to displace the impact this country has had for Israel, but there are Palestinians in the United States affected in addition. He advised to be careful of who the commission is perceived to be supporting. He concurred with Ms. Garnett that the message needs to be understood before it is approved. While acknowledging it will take time, he stated the commission must come prepared with statements when acting as a unified group. It is difficult to agree or disagree without material to reference.

Ms. Aber stated the commission must vote on everything at the meeting.

Mr. Murphy believed it would be best to write the statement, present it at the meeting, make necessary edits with the time allotted, and then vote on it.

Ms. Garnett agreed noting there is a month to draft the language of the statement. It could be drafted, sent to Ms. Schiano, and then it could be distributed to the members for discussion and approval at the next meeting.

Ms. Reed confirmed this is a feasible process.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Jackson motioned to adjourn.

Ms. Garnett adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Jordan Herring  
Administrative Professional I

/jh